

Supreme Court Commissions – Internet Service Project
Project Update and Request for Funding
Presented to lowAccess Advisory Council
September 14, 2005

Goal: To provide the public online information regarding Iowa lawyers and certified shorthand reporters; to provide online reporting, fee payment and other license-related services to Iowa lawyers and certified shorthand reporters; to provide online application services to continuing legal education (CLE) seminar sponsors and attending lawyers; and to provide electronic reporting and interest payment services to financial institutions serving as depositories of the pooled trust accounts of Iowa lawyers.

Project Purpose: The purpose of this project is to create a web-based Internet interface for the public, Iowa lawyers, Iowa shorthand reporters, CLE event sponsors and trust account depository institutions to use in accessing the services of Court Commissions. The public would be able to search for lawyers or shorthand reporters by name, by geographic area or by field of practice, and view public information regarding any lawyer or shorthand reporter including business address, date of admission, field of practice designations, license status and a summary of any prior public discipline. Lawyers and shorthand reporters would be able to accomplish annual reporting, fee payment and other license-related actions online. Sponsors of continuing legal education events and attending lawyers would be able to submit events for review and receive approval online. Trust account depositories would be able to transmit interest payments electronically and submit periodic interest reports in electronic format for direct capture in the database. A corollary purpose of the project is to create an internal interface to the Oracle database to be used by the staff at Court Commissions and selected other Judicial Branch staff.

Background: The commissions encapsulated under the label “Court Commissions” include the Commission on Continuing Legal Education (CLE), Board of Examiners of Shorthand Reporters (SHR), Grievance Commission, Lawyer Trust Account Commission (LTAC), and the Client Security Commission (Client Security). Court Commissions is the principal repository of current information regarding the business address, license status and past disciplinary history of all lawyers and certified shorthand reporters licensed to practice in Iowa. Currently all of the reporting and application services of Court Commissions are administered using paper reports handled through ordinary mail. All fee and interest payments are accepted in the form of check or money order. Entries based on the paper reports and fee payments are made in the existing Access database by hand. Currently, no consolidated information regarding licensed Iowa lawyers, their license status or past disciplinary history is available to the Iowa public or media online.

Project Status: At the March 2005 meeting, the Council approved a grant of \$38,875 to fund one-half of the planning cost of the project. The remainder of the planning cost has been provided by Court Commissions. The planning phase for the internal interface to be used by the staff of Court Commission has been completed, resulting in a final requirements document and web screen mockups for the interface. The planning phase

for the external interface for the public, lawyers, certified court reporters and CLE event sponsors is nearing completion, and also is expected to result in a final requirements document and web screen mockups for the interface. Development has begun on the code necessary to implement the internal interface, and testing of the internal interface is expected to occur in September and October. Development of the code necessary to implement the external interface is expected to commence in October or November, with testing of the external interface expected in November and December. Phased implementation of the external and internal interfaces is expected to begin in late December of 2005 or early January of 2006.

Request: Court Commissions requests funding to complete execution of the project, which involves the following remaining steps:

1. Development of code supporting the external interface for the public, lawyers, shorthand reporters, CLE event sponsors and trust account depositories.
2. Development of code supporting the internal interface to the Oracle database.
3. Conversion of the existing Court Commissions Access database to Oracle.
4. Acquisition and placement of an Oracle application server with the Information Technology Enterprise.
5. Installation of the external interface on the appropriate host server at the Information Technology Enterprise.

Cost Avoidance: It is expected that online availability of the services of Court Commissions will reduce transaction costs for lawyers, shorthand reporters, CLE event sponsors, trust account depositories and Court Commissions.

Project Funds: Supreme Court Commissions is requesting lowAccess funding for one-half of the remaining execution cost of the project, or \$195,955. Court Commissions would self-fund the remaining one-half of the execution cost. Iowa Court Information Systems (ICIS) is providing project management and application testing services on an in-kind basis. The detail on the remaining project cost is as follows:

Complete Code Development for Internal Interface	\$ 210,000
Complete Code Development for External Interface	90,000
Convert Existing Court Commissions Database to Oracle	36,910
Purchase Oracle Application Server and Licenses	30,000
Install and Set Up Oracle Application Server	25,000
Project Management and Application Testing	---- In-Kind (ICIS)
Total Remaining Out of Pocket Cost to Complete Project	\$ 391,910